

Prep basketball: Noxubee County girls dominate West Point

Tigers girls, Green Wave boys pick up wins Friday night

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Noxubee County's Tootie Lockett (2) shoots against Union during an MHSAA Class 3A semifinal game on March 2. Lockett had 29 points in the Tigers' 63-43 win over the Green Wave on Friday night. Photo by: Chris Todd/Dispatch file photo

WEST POINT — With district schedules done and over with, Noxubee County and West Point girls basketball didn't really have much to play for on Friday night other than to win a local rivalry.

The Tigers and Green Wave both secured the No. 1 seeds in their respective districts headed into next week's district tournaments, but Friday's game did have meaning as a tune-up for next week.

Noxubee County wasted no time making its presence felt, especially guard Tootie Lockett, who put on an absolute show.

Lockett, one of the leading scorers in the state, let alone the region, had herself a game, a 29-point performance as the Tigers took care of business with a 63-43 win.

"When I saw my first shot go up, I knew what night it was going to be," Lockett said. "I had to make sure to help get my teammates going to get off to a good start too."

Two Tigers (23-3) finished in double figures in the win, with Lockett nearly scoring half of Noxubee County's points on her own.

She was an unstoppable force, and West Point (13-6) couldn't find a way to handle her, though the Green Wave weren't nearly at full strength in Friday's game.

Head coach Montez "Tez" Calvert decided to play the starters for half of the night, allowing his bench to get some much-needed minutes before the playoffs begin.

"I got a lot of girls time who weren't used to getting a large amount, and I just wanted to see how they would handle themselves," Calvert said. "I think for the most part they did, minus a turnover here, a turnover there. The only way you get better is to play the game.

"No matter how much we practice it, when you play live, that's when you grow."

Noxubee County had already created some separation with West Point's starters on the floor and continued to expand on that as the game progressed, reaching a 20-point lead in the fourth quarter.

The Tigers, especially Lockett, were too fast down the floor and capitalized off a number of fastbreak opportunities that for many teams would simply just be another trip down the floor.

It wasn't quite the same for Noxubee County, which wraps up its regular season this weekend.

Heading into district tournament play, Friday was a statement-making win and one that will look to continue to propel the team in the right direction.

“It’s a great thing that when you have one of the girls not producing, others can step in,” Noxubee County head coach Micheal Johnson said. “... That’s why it’s called a team.”

West Point boys 66, Noxubee County 48

The West Point boys had gotten off to a fast start in the first quarter, jumping out to a commanding 16-2 lead over Noxubee County in its final home game of the season.

Following an Elijah Young basket, the Green Wave took a quick stoppage of play to recognize Young reaching 1,000 points in his career with the program, which caught him by surprise.

The senior guard ended up leading West Point with 14 points in a game that saw them dominate early and seal the deal late, heading into its regular-season finale with a 66-48 win over Noxubee County.

“It felt great,” Young said. “Very surprising, very surprising.”

The moment, while seemingly out of nowhere, was a great synopsis of what West Point has been able to do this season, clinching the No. 1 seed in district play prior to its final two games of the season.

Friday was a tune-up for what to expect next week, and the Green Wave (18-6) answered the call as three players, including Young, finished in double figures in the win.

“I think the boys were focused, and this being our last home game, there was just excitement to get back on the court and come out and avenge the last loss,” West Point head coach Marquis Burnett said.

After dropping its last game to Saltillo, West Point had an extra jolt of energy to pull one out, especially with it being the Green Wave’s regular-season home finale.

Things got a bit choppy in the second half as Noxubee County was able to cut the deficit to single digits, keeping things close, but West Point was able to weather the storm and come out victorious.

On the other side of things, Noxubee County (8-12), despite not having the best of seasons so far, played the Green Wave tough and kept itself in the ballgame.

“My team is young, inexperienced and we fought back into the game,” Noxubee County head coach Danny Crawford said. “Moving forward, we have to focus on not getting into a hole early on and starting out with the same energy.”

Both teams finish out the regular season over the weekend, but for West Point, riding the momentum of this win is going to be crucial heading into the playoffs.

“We feel like we’re on a good level of playing basketball,” Young said. “We’re hoping to go into Aberdeen tomorrow and get a win to go into the district tournament with our heads held high.”